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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE REMOVAL AND PREVENTION  
EPA CONTRACT 68-01-7367

TAT-02-F-05441

MEMORANDUM

TO: W. Gad Tawadros  
Response and Prevention Branch

FROM: William Kowalski, TAT PM *wgk*  
Edward Leonard, TAT QC *EL*

SUBJECT: S & A Plastics  
350 Roosevelt Avenue  
Carteret, New Jersey

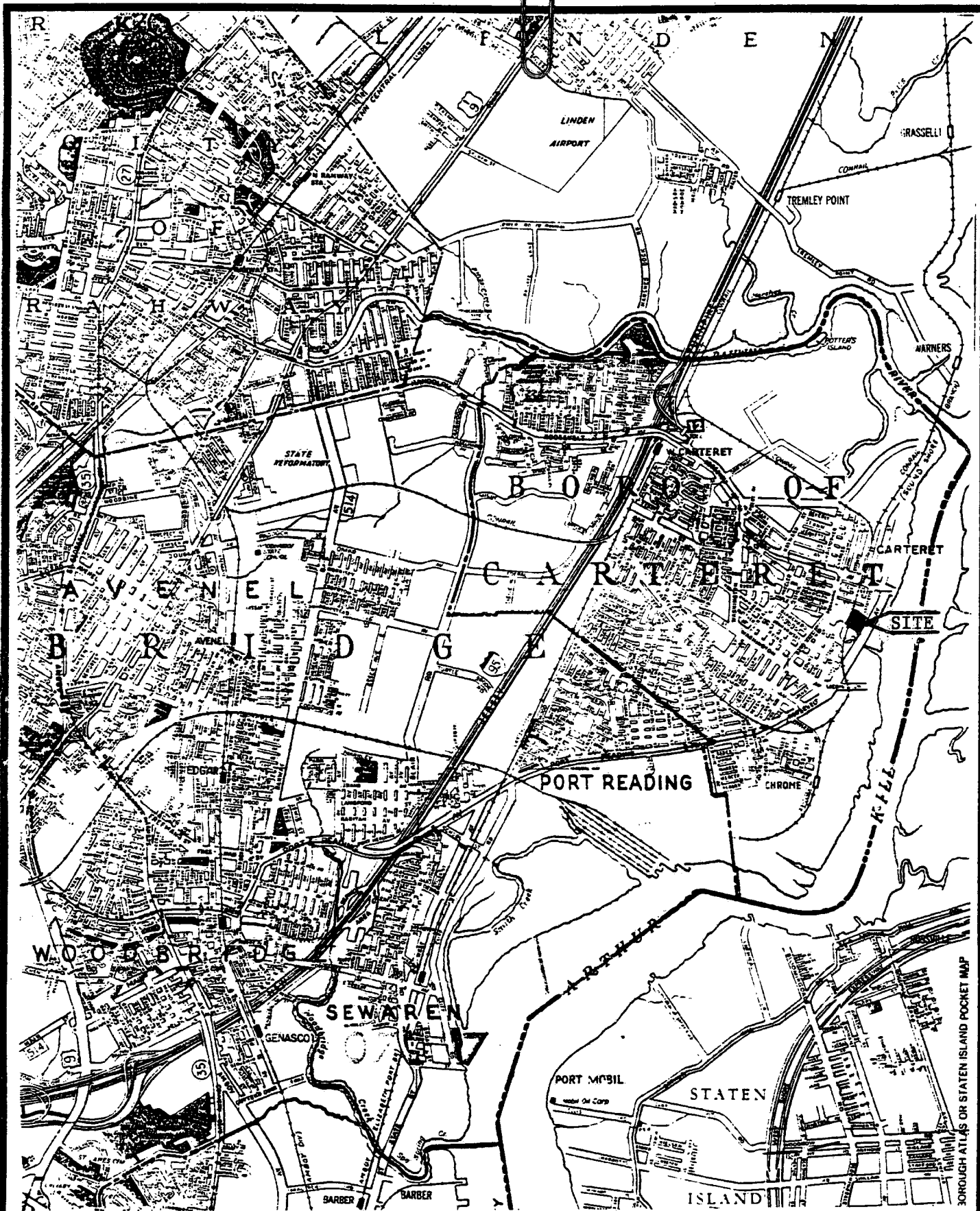
DATE: August 25, 1989

At approximately 0530 hours on August 19, 1989 a fire broke out at the S & A Plastics recycling facility in Carteret, New Jersey. The Carteret Office of Emergency Management (COEM) was activated and initial responders to the scene included approximately seven fire companies, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the Middlesex County HazMat (MCHM) team and the US Coast Guard (USCG). At this time the major concerns were the potential plume contaminants, the potential for an adjacent building (Unocal) to be involved in the fire and a runoff of oil from the site to an unknown creek, which is a direct inlet of the Arthur Kill. The Unocal facility is a subdivision of Chevron Chemical and contained numerous solvents, flammable liquids and hazardous chemicals. The USEPA received a request from the NJDEP to assist in air monitoring at the site.

At approximately 0940 hours on August 19, 1989 the EPA-TAT team was activated, and in accordance with TDD No. 02-8908-09, responded to the site. Prior to departure, EPA-TAT contacted the Carteret Fire Department for an update of the situation and for directions to the site command post. EPA-TAT was informed that the fire was under control and the gravity of the situation had been downgraded. Based on this information EPA-TAT activated an air monitoring team on standby and one TAT member responded to the site to investigate current conditions.

**Roy F. Weston, Inc.**  
**MAJOR PROGRAMS DIVISION**

In Association with ICF Technology, Inc., C.C. Johnson & Malhotra, P.C., Resource Applications, Inc.,  
and R.E. Sarriera Associates



SPILL PREVENTION &  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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Malhotra, P.C., Resource Applications, Inc. and  
R.E. Sarriera Associates

EPA PM

W. Gad Tawadros

TAT PM

William Kowalski

SITE LOCATION

S&A Plastics

30R004115 OR STATEN ISLAND POCKET MAP

At approximately 1010 hours, EPA-TAT arrived at the site command post and met with a representative of the NJDEP. It was ascertained at this time, that air monitoring performed by the NJDEP and the MCHM had not detected any hazardous chemicals in the fire plume or surrounding community, other than normal hydrocarbons. The main concern was the threat of involvement of the Unocal facility.

At approximately 1045 hours, EPA-TAT attended a meeting at the Carteret Borough Hall. The meeting was attended by EPA-TAT, Mr. Nagey (COEM), Sgt. E. O'Niell (State Police Emergency Management), Chief Miller (USCG) and Mr. F. Stoop (NJDEP). At the meeting the following information was attained:

1. The fire broke out from unknown causes at approximately 0523 hrs.
2. Approximately 600 people were evacuated due to unknown contents of the smoke plume and the potential for involvement of the Unocal facility.
3. Seventeen (17) people had been taken to local hospitals for various degrees of smoke inhalation. Most people had already been released.
4. Two drums of ammonium hydroxide stored on the Unocal property had been involved in the fire. All parties agreed that due to the amounts of fire fighting water and rain, this release posed no real threat.
5. The fire was declared under control and no further potential existed for the involvement of Unocal in this incident.
6. Air monitoring has been discontinued. All previous monitoring showed no positive results, other than hydrocarbons. At this time, the S & A building had been completely burned out.
7. Oil, from an unknown source, was running off from the site to an unknown creek, which is a direct inlet of the Arthur Kill. The MCHM was attempting to place booms in the creek to contain the oil before the tide began to go out.
8. Mr. Nagey (COEM) stated that a return to the area by evacuees was at their discretion and a voluntary evacuation would remain in effect until 1500 hrs.

At approximately 1200 hours, EPA-TAT inspected the fire scene from a safe distance along with the USCG and the NJDEP. The S & A Plastics facility was still smoldering, but had been completely burned out. At this time, some fire companies were beginning to scale down activities. One side of the Unocal building was scorched, but no other material had been involved in the fire,

other than the two drums of ammonium hydroxide. EPA-TAT met with representatives of the MCHM team and confirmed that all air monitoring data had been negative other than hydrocarbons, and that air monitoring had been ceased due to lack of any further threat. By 1300 hours the MCHM team had sausage booms and a boom skirt in place on the creek. The tide in the creek was beginning to flow out and the booms were working to the satisfaction of the USCG. The oil probably emanated from machinery in the facility and the USCG estimated that less than one barrel was involved.

At approximately 1315 hours EPA-TAT briefed the EPA-OSC of the situation and events of the day. At approximately 1400 hours EPA-TAT confirmed with the NJDEP and the COEM that no further actions were required by the EPA-TAT and departed the site.

During the ensuing three days the pooled oil in the unknown creek was vacuumed up and clean booms were placed by the MCHM. By August 23, 1989 no residual or leaching oil remained in the creek; however, a precautionary clean sausage boom was left on the creek.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Panorama of the South side of S&A Plastics including the UNOCAL facility





Panorama of the North side of the S&A Plastics facility



Views of the alley between S&A Plastics and the UNOCAL facility  
Note scorched walls







Views of the fire damage to the S&A Plastics facility





Views of the fire damage to S&A Plastics facility







View of Unknown Creek in relationship to S&A Plastics



View of Creek and Boom after pooled oil had been cleaned up



Views of Unknown Creek Westward from the Arthur Kill after pooled oil had been cleaned up and new sausage boom inserted in the creek

